Gautam Sachdeva - Nikhil Kripalani 2013 video - Spending No Time With Eckhart Tolle - Part 1 to 3 | Gautam Sachdeva [SV72bm0LbFg]

[Speaker 2] (0:08 - 0:14)

Gautam, could you share any stories about your meetings with Eckhart Tolle, any incidents that stood out?

[Speaker 1] (0:15 - 6:34)

Yeah, there were two incidents... actually, there were quite a few, but he's quite a funny man... So, one I remember, we were visiting him in Glastonbury, I think this was in 2004, a group of us went, and I had looked up the internet, Google and all that stuff, to see what's there to see in Glastonbury, and I found one man who was very knowledgeable, he would show us around, he was doing a day tour, so I fixed everything up, and we'd see this, that, and the high point of the tour was the Glastonbury Tor, which is this hill, very sacred hill, so he would take us up that hill, and explain to us the significance, the theories, etc. Glastonbury is a very special place, so all this was finalized. Now what happened was, the evening before we had dinner with Eckhart in Glastonbury, so he said, what are you guys doing tomorrow morning?

So I told him, I said, you know Eckhart, we fixed this whole thing up, this guy is really amazing, and I think you should come along, you know, because it will be really entertaining. He said, I have spent many years, I mean many years or a couple of years, but a lot of time in Glastonbury. So he said, would you like me as your tour guide?

So I said, you gotta be kidding, I mean, you know, we'd love it. He said, but there'll be one difference. So I said, what?

He said, I won't say a word. You know, so, I mean, naturally, I had to apologize profusely to the tour guide we set up, and I couldn't tell him the reason why, because he wouldn't understand it. But anyway, that was shelved.

And so the next day, we all went up with Eckhart. It was, I think, a 45-minute climb up the top, in complete silence. And I tell you, it was the best.

It was true justice being done to that walk up the Glastonbury tour. Words would have been superfluous, you know. And I really liked my time with Eckhart, because my own nature was of being quiet.

Even Ramesh would keep telling me, you know, you're a quiet boy. Even when I was 40 years old, no, when I was 39, he would still say, you're a quiet boy. That's my nature.

And Ramesh, who was also quiet, was really something I resonated with, and I found that

in Eckhart as well. Very quiet. So that walk up the tour in those 45 minutes with a group of us was just immensely gratifying, because we really soaked in the whole scenery, the space, and truly, you know, what are dates, and years, and numbers, and this happened 300 years ago, that happened 750 years ago...

It's really... you lose out the essence of the present moment, which is His teaching. And I had a similar experience with Him when we went in Tiruvannamalai, up the hill of Arunachala.

So Eckhart was there with a small group of us, and it was a walk up in silence. The simplest thing, you know, there's no need for talking, and at such sacred places, that's the greatest gift, is the gift of silence. So even if it...

actually I remember, because Eckhart, from what I recall, loved walking. Whether it was these two hills, whether we took a walk in Findhorn, when he was giving a talk in Findhorn, the riverbed had dried up, and a few of us went for a walk on the riverbed. We didn't speak, you see.

So that's probably why I cherish those memories. But Ramesh, on the other hand, loved to talk, and it was such fun. You know, he couldn't sit still.

His nature was like, okay, what's happening, and you know... I remember with Ramesh once, I'm sitting in his living room, we are having soup, and we are sitting, and he's on his rocking chair like this, and he's looking at the room, and he says, what a wonderful room! And I'm like, I told myself, is this guy joking, because he lives here, you know.

But so spontaneous. It is a wonderful room, and for that to come out, he was so in the moment, you know. So it was incredible, because of course, I mean, Ramesh was Ramesh, but coming back to Eckhart, I even remember one incident at Vancouver, when we had dinner, and red wine was served.

This was in the early days, when I didn't know Eckhart much at all, and he had his glass of wine, and he took a sip, like we all take the first sip very gently, and taste the wine, and put it down, and then the man went around serving wine to everyone else, and he then came back to us, put some more wine, and went. And then I saw Eckhart picking up the glass again, and going through the same gentle and slow ritual, and I thought that, you know, this is not his first sip, because I just saw like 10 minutes back, or 5 minutes back, you know. So I looked at him, I said, Eckhart, just to clarify, the kind of, the way you approached this sip of wine is incredible to see, but I think I saw it before, is it a deja vu or what, you know.

And he said, No, it is my second sip, but it is as if it's my first, and then he burst out laughing, and it was so true. So what I like is when you can see the Teaching being lived, whoever it is, you see, when anyone is living their Teaching, that is a sign of

authenticity, then you know it's no longer a theory. So with Eckhart, what stays with me most is the times when there was not much speaking at all.

[Speaker 2] (6:35 - 7:04)

Could you share your first funny meeting with Eckhart, where it was set up for you, and you had nothing to ask him really?

[Speaker 1] (7:06 - 19:02)

Yeah, that is really... it was the year 1999, I was on holiday in Hong Kong, and my sister said, you know, there's this author, and she was in love, she is in love with Eckhart, and at that time, he was not known. So they had organized these small interviews, one-to-one sessions with Eckhart, and she booked me in for a session, and I was aghast, because I had my shopping to do, and Hong Kong was all about dining and having fun, so I protested, you know, I told my sister, I'm on holiday, and she said, No, no, you must.

So I said, Okay. So I met Eckhart, and we just sat in the same room, it was beautiful, it was all quiet. And he said, What would you like to talk about?

So I said, you know, Eckhart, I'm on holiday, and I really haven't got a list of anything, and I'm sure I have a long list if I came up with one, but you know, I really don't know. So he said, Okay. So we spoke about the most mundane stuff, you know, which was such fun.

We spoke about... I had an observation that everyone wore black in the daytime in Hong Kong. And he said, Yes, and look at the proliferation of banks all around, you just see banks everywhere, you know, money, and banking, and all that.

So we just... it was incredible, because it was the most mundane conversation that could take place. But one thing which stayed with me, because I remember that simply because when my sister asked me, How was your time with Eckhart?

I said, It was good fun, you know, I quite enjoyed it. But I must say one thing, this man, whatever rubbish I spoke about, about these kind of things, you know, we just chatted all in the air. But he gave me attention as if mantras were coming out of my mouth.

I said that stayed with me, you know. And I met Eckhart, I think a few months before I met Ramesh, a couple of months before. I really had no reference to the teachings or the subject at all, that was not my background.

But that really stayed with me. The way he was fully there, you know, completely, totally there, was something which was quite zap, because I said, I mean, you know, if someone can be so gracious, and so attentive, when such mundane talk is taking place, it's beautiful. So it kind of endured me to him, and I had not read The Power of Now at that

time, and I was not...

that was really not my path, but I just enjoyed this. So I'm grateful that I've had the opportunity to share such times with such people. It's been very enthralling, you know, it's fun.

I think this was when Eckhart and me were in Pondicherry. We were having dinner one evening, and what had happened is, the day I met Eckhart, when I flew from Mumbai to Chennai, and then went to Pondicherry, I had lost my grandmother the same morning. She was ailing, and we knew she was on her way out, and she passed away in the morning, and we did all the funeral and everything, and we moved on.

So my conversation with Eckhart at the dinner table, which I remember very clearly, is a question I asked him, this was going way back now, 12 years... I told Eckhart, I said, I have noticed whenever someone who I love dies, in which case, here was my grandmother who had passed away, about a year before that, my dog had passed away, I had a dog for 17 years. My question was, whenever someone passes away, I sense a vacuum.

The vacuum is external in the sense that the person who was there is no more, like for example, my dog was in a particular spot, I would see him every day coming back from work, and he is not there, so that's a physical vacuum. And then is the vacuum inside. You feel that loss.

So I asked Eckhart, I said, I felt this when my grandmother passed away, when my dog passed away, when anyone passes away, that vacuum is sensed. What would happen if everyone I loved passed away at the same time? This was my question.

And he looked at me, and he smiled. He said, that's a wonderful question... it was quite strange, actually...

and he said, the answer is astonishingly simple. He said, that's what Enlightenment is. After 12 years, the understanding is there of what he meant.

My understanding is, what he was pointing to, was the fact that when you do not derive your sense of Self from anyone, anything, then one is enlightened. Because the Ego derives its sense of Self from objects, it could be animate or inanimate objects, people, objects, expensive objects around, or things we treasure, or even thoughts. We derive our sense of Self from these things.

When we no longer derive our sense of Self, that is what Enlightenment is. I think it's quite clear. And again, Eckhart gave such a beautiful pointer to this, that it was something which was...

you can't argue with it, it's so clear to me, it's so clearly seen, that this is the core. The

core is the Ego's constant deriving its sense of Self from the other. Ramesh's Guru's Guru, Siddharameshwar Maharaj, had said, when you are at that state where nothing affects you, if someone you love passes away, it is the same as if you heard the news of someone else's friend passing away in some village, that is the true state.

This is what he meant. Of course, according to my understanding, this is what it is. This is what it means to die before you die.

We read so many teachers say, die before you die. Eckhart says, die before you die. It means die to this deriving the sense of Self from the external.

When that is history, then you are left with what is... conscious presence, that is all there is. So there is no object as such separate from yourself, because there is what is, which is the conscious presence of what is.

And objects themselves, and appearance in that consciousness as nothing apart from Me, so to speak, that is the total What Is. So then what would happen if an object appeared or disappeared? All objects come and go, that is one's life experience.

Your cherished relationships come and go, objects disintegrate, deteriorate, isn't that everyone's life experience? Everything comes and goes. Now this reminds me of another Maharaj story, it's just come to mind.

Again, Mularpatan, Maharaj's translator, whom I would keep needling for giving me stories on Maharaj, I said, do you remember anything else? Something really impactful, which Maharaj said, He said, yeah, he said, once this man who was of some professor in Vedanta came to Maharaj's Satsang, very proud, sat there, looked at everyone first, everyone acknowledged him, and then he posed a question to Maharaj. He said, Maharajji, I have a question, and looked around.

So Maharaj looked at him and said, Yes. He said, What would happen if Shiva and Vishnu came and stood in front of you right now? And then again, looked around, and Maharaj looked at him and said, I would tell them to get out.

And actually, I don't think Maharaj said, get out, he used some expletives, which really upset this man. He said, How dare you say this about Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu, and was very angry, and looked at everyone, and what is this going on, and he left. After he left, Maharaj told his audience, his Satsang, he said, obviously, whatever comes is going to go, even if it's Shiva or Vishnu who come and stand in front of me, they are going to go.

Whatever comes, goes. I am only interested in the Eternal. The man missed the point.

So everything is transient. Everything that is witnessed in this movie of life comes and goes. As we clock more years, we go deeper into that, knowing that things move.

But what is constant is the awareness in which it comes and goes. So coming back to Eckhart, I think in that one-line answer, it was a beautiful gift, it gave so much clarity, at least to me. That's what it was.

So I won't forget that one dinner conversation easily. It's so nice to have such conversations, because normally at dinners and social gatherings, one is talking about which movies have you seen, and how's the weather here, where have you travelled, and then on the other end, you have this conversation, which is a refreshing change. So I really cherish these memories with Eckhart.

It's been a while, but it's really stayed.

[Speaker 2] (19:18 - 19:24)

Gautam, could you share any stories about your meetings with Eckhart Tolle, any incidents that stood out?

[Speaker 1] (19:26 - 25:44)

Yeah, there were two incidents, actually there were quite a few, but he's quite a funny man. So one I remember, we were visiting him in Glastonbury, I think this was in 2004. A group of us went, and I had looked up the internet, Google and all that stuff, to see what's there to see in Glastonbury.

And I found one man who was very knowledgeable, he would show us around, he was doing a day tour. So I fixed everything up, and we'd see this, that, and the high point of the tour was the Glastonbury Tor, which is this hill, very sacred hill. So he would take us up that hill, and explain to us the significance, the theories, etc.

Glastonbury is a very special place. So all this was finalized. Now what happened was, the evening before, we had dinner with Eckhart in Glastonbury.

So he said, what are you guys doing tomorrow morning? So I told him, I said, you know Eckhart, we fixed this whole thing up, this guy is really amazing. And I think you should come along, you know, because it will be really entertaining.

He said, I have spent many years, I mean many years or couple of years, but a lot of time in Glastonbury. So he said, would you like me as your tour guide? So I said, you gotta be kidding, I mean, you know, we'd love it.

He said, but there'll be one difference. So I said, what? He said, I won't say a word.

You know, so, I mean, naturally, I had to apologize profusely to the tour guide we set up, and I couldn't tell him the reason why, because he wouldn't understand it. But anyway, that was shelved. And so the next day, we all went up with Eckhart.

It was, I think, a 45-minute climb up the top, in complete silence. And I tell you, it was the best. It was true justice being done to that walk up the Glastonbury top.

Words would have been superfluous, you know. And I really liked my time with Eckhart because my own nature was of being quiet. Even Ramesh would keep telling me, you know, you're a quiet boy.

Even when I was 40 years old, no, when I was 39, he would still say, you're a quiet boy. That's my nature. And Eckhart, who was also quiet, was really something I resonated with, and I found that in Eckhart as well.

Very quiet. So that walk up the top in those 45 minutes with a group of us was just immensely gratifying, because we really soaked in the whole scenery, the space, and truly, you know, what are dates, and years, and numbers, and this happened 300 years ago, that happened 750 years ago... It's really, you lose out the essence of the present moment, which is his teaching.

And I had a similar experience with him when we went in Tiruvannamalai, up the hill of Arunachala. So Eckhart was there with a small group of us, and it was a walk up in silence. I mean, the simplest thing, you know, there's no need for talking, and at such sacred places, that's the greatest gift, is a gift of silence.

So even if it... actually I remember, because Eckhart, from what I recall, loved walking. Whether it was these two hills, whether we took a walk in Findhorn, when he was giving a talk in Findhorn, the riverbed had dried up, and a few of us went for a walk on the riverbed.

We didn't speak, you see. So that's probably why I cherish those memories. But Ramesh, on the other hand, loved to talk, and it was such fun.

You know, he couldn't sit still. His nature was like, okay, what's happening, and you know, I remember with Ramesh once, I'm sitting in his living room, we are having soup, and we are sitting, and he's on his rocking chair like this, and he's looking at the room, and he says, what a wonderful room. And I'm like, I told myself, is this guy joking, because he lives here, you know.

But so spontaneous. It is a wonderful room, and for that to come out, he was so in the moment, you know. So it was incredible, because of course, I mean, Ramesh was Ramesh, but coming back to Eckhart, I even remember one incident at Vancouver, when we had dinner, and red wine was served.

This was in the early days, when I didn't know Eckhart much at all, and he had his glass of wine, and he took a sip, like we all take the first sip very gently, and taste the wine, and put it down, and then the man went around serving wine to everyone else, and he then came back to us, put some more wine, and went... And then I saw Eckhart picking

up the glass again, and going through the same gentle and slow ritual, and I thought that, you know, this is not his first sip, because I just saw like 10 minutes back, or 5 minutes back, you know, so I looked at him, I said, Eckhart, just to clarify, the kind of, the way you approached this sip of wine is incredible to see, but I think I saw it before, is it a deja vu or what, you know. And he said, no, it is my second sip, but it is as if it's my first, and then he burst out laughing, you know, and it was so true.

So what I like is when you can see the Teaching being lived, whoever it is, you see, when anyone is living their Teaching, that is a sign of authenticity, then you know it's no longer a theory. So with Eckhart, I mean, what stays with me most is the times when there was not much speaking at all.

[Speaker 2] (25:45 - 26:15)

Would you share your first funny meeting with Eckhart, where it was set up for you, and you had nothing to ask him really?

[Speaker 1] (26:17 - 38:12)

Yeah, that is really... it was the year 1999, I was on holiday in Hong Kong, and my sister said, you know, there's this author, and she was in love, she is in love with Eckhart, and at that time, he was not known. So they had organized these small interviews, one-to-one sessions with Eckhart, and she booked me in for a session, and I was aghast, because I had my shopping to do, and Hong Kong was all about dining and having fun, so I protested, you know, I told my sister, I am on holiday, and she said, no, no, you must.

So I said, okay. So I met Eckhart, and we just sat in the same room, it was beautiful, it was all quiet, and he said, what would you like to talk about? So I said, you know, Eckhart, I am on holiday, and I really haven't got a list of anything, and I am sure I have a long list, if I came up with one, but, you know, I really don't know.

So he said, okay. So we spoke about the most mundane stuff, you know, which was such fun. We spoke about...

I had an observation that everyone wore black in the daytime in Hong Kong, and he said, yes, and look at the proliferation of banks all around, you just see banks everywhere, you know, money, and banking, and all that. So we just... it was incredible, because it was the most mundane conversation that could take place.

But one thing which stayed with me, because I remember that simply because when my sister asked me, how was your time with Eckhart, I said, it was good fun, you know, I quite enjoyed it, but I must say one thing, this man, whatever rubbish I spoke about, about these kind of things, you know, we just chatted all in the air, but he gave me attention as if mantras were coming out of my mouth. I said, that stayed with me, you know. And I met Eckhart, I think a few months before I met Ramesh, a couple of months

before.

I really had no reference to the teachings or the subject at all, that was not my background, but that really stayed with me. The way he was fully there, you know, completely, totally there, was something which was quite zap, because I said, you know, if someone can be so gracious, and so attentive, when such mundane talk is taking place, it's beautiful. So it kind of endured me to him, and I had not read The Power of Now at that time, and that was really not my path, but I just enjoyed this.

So I'm grateful that I've had the opportunity to share such times with such people. It's been very enthralling, you know, it's fun. I think this was when Eckhart and me were in Pondicherry, we were having dinner one evening, and what had happened is, the day I met Eckhart, when I flew from Mumbai to Chennai, and then went to Pondicherry, I had lost my grandmother the same morning.

She was ailing, and we knew she was on her way out, and she passed away in the morning, and we did all the funeral and everything, and we moved on. So my conversation with Eckhart at the dinner table, which I remember very clearly, is a question I asked him, this was going way back now, 12 years... I told Eckhart, I said, I have noticed whenever someone who I love dies, in which case, here was my grandmother who had passed away, about a year before that, my dog had passed away, I had a dog for 17 years.

My question was, whenever someone passes away, I sense a vacuum. The vacuum is external in the sense that the person who was there is no more, like for example, my dog was in a particular spot, I would see him every day coming back from work, and he is not there, so that's a physical vacuum. And then is the vacuum inside.

You feel that loss. So I asked Eckhart, I said, I felt this when my grandmother passed away, when my dog passed away, when anyone passes away, that vacuum is sensed. What would happen if everyone I loved passed away at the same time?

This was my question. And he looked at me, and he smiled. He said, that's a wonderful question...

it was quite strange, actually... and he said, the answer is astonishingly simple. He said, that's what Enlightenment is.

After 12 years, the understanding is there of what he meant. My understanding is, what he was pointing to, was the fact that when you do not derive your sense of Self from anyone, anything, then one is Enlightened. Because the Ego derives its sense of Self from objects, it could be animate or inanimate objects, people, objects, expensive objects around, or things we treasure, or even thoughts.

We derive our sense of Self from these things. When we no longer derive our sense of

Self, that is what Enlightenment is. I think it's quite clear.

And again, Eckhart gave such a beautiful pointer to this, that it was something which was... you can't argue with it, it's so clear to me, it's so clearly seen, that this is the core. The core is the Ego's constant deriving its sense of Self from the other.

Ramesh's Guru's Guru, Siddharameshwar Maharaj, had said, when you are at that state where nothing affects you, if someone you love passes away, it is the same as if you heard the news of someone else's friend passing away in some village, that is the true state. This is what he meant. Of course, according to my understanding, this is what it is.

This is what it means to die before you die. We read so many teachers say, die before you die. Eckhart says, die before you die.

It means die to this deriving the sense of Self from the external. When that is history, then you are left with what-is, conscious presence. That is all there is.

So there is no object as such separate from yourself, because there is what-is, which is the conscious presence of what-is. And objects themselves, and appearance in that consciousness, as nothing apart from Me, so to speak, that is the total what-is. So then what would happen if an object appeared or disappeared?

All objects come and go, that is one's life experience. Your cherished relationships come and go, objects disintegrate, deteriorate, isn't that everyone's life experience? Everything comes and goes.

Now this reminds me of another Maharaj story, it's just come to mind. Again, Muller Patan, Maharaj's translator, whom I would keep needling for giving me stories on Maharaj, I said, Do you remember anything else? Something really impactful which Maharaj said.

He said, Yeah. Once this man who was of some professor in Vedanta came to Maharaj's Satsang, very proud, sat there, looked at everyone first, everyone acknowledged him, and then he posed a question to Maharaj. He said, Maharajji, I have a question, and he looked around...

So Maharaj looked at him and said, Yes. He said, What would happen if Shiva and Vishnu came and stood in front of you right now? And then again, he looked around, and Maharaj looked at him and said, I would tell them to get out.

And actually, I don't think Maharaj said get out, he used some expletives, which really upset this man. He said, How dare you say this about Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu? And he was very angry, and looked at everyone, and said, What is this going on?

And he left. After he left, Maharaj told his audience, his Satsang, he said, Obviously,

whatever comes is going to go. Even if it's Shiva or Vishnu who come and stand in front of me, they are going to go.

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But what is constant is the awareness in which it comes and goes. So coming back to Eckhart, I think, in that one-line answer, it was a beautiful gift. It gave so much clarity, at least to me.

That's what it was. So I won't forget that one dinner conversation easily. It's so nice to have such conversations, because normally at dinners and social gatherings, one is talking about which movies have you seen, and how's the weather here, where have you travelled, and then on the other end, you have this conversation, which is a refreshing change.

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